

## Testimony in Favor of LD 1714

May 10, 2023

Hello, Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and members of the Committee on Taxation,

My name is Kari Taylor, and I am a person in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD), the Director of the Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative and The HILLS Recovery Center (Oxford Hills), and a resident of Naples. I am writing to testify on behalf of LD 1714, An Act to Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers Using a Percentage of the Adult Use Cannabis Tax Revenue.

As someone in recovery from SUD and the Director of a new recovery center in Oxford Hills, I can attest to the critical importance of these centers in providing ongoing support and resources to those who are trying to overcome addiction.

Recovery Community Centers are often the first point of contact for individuals seeking help with addiction. These centers provide a safe and supportive environment where people can connect with others who are going through similar experiences and access a range of services. For many people, these centers are a lifeline that helps them stay on the path of recovery.

However, many recovery community centers struggle to secure sustainable funding despite their vital importance. Too often, these centers rely on grants or donations, which can be unpredictable and insufficient to meet the growing demand for services. For example, the HILLS Recovery Center only has enough funding to employ two full-time and one part-time employee, including myself as Director. We have no support staff and rely on volunteers to fill in the gaps. As a result, we are only open 20 hours a week, creating a huge barrier for people needing services. In addition, the little funding we have only lasts another two years. So, while trying to help people with minimal resources, we also have to spend much of our time securing additional funding. This bill would create a dedicated funding source that would help ensure the long-term viability of these centers and allow them to expand their reach and impact. It will allow us to focus on what matters most, helping people.

From my own experience, I know how crucial it is to have ongoing support and resources as I work to maintain my sobriety. Recovery is not a one-time event but a lifelong journey, and recovery community centers play an essential role in helping people stay on that path. When I was in active addiction, I felt alone and shameful. I didn't understand why I couldn't moderate my use. I didn't know there were other people "like me" and that support was available to change my life. Almost six years ago, I came to Maine for treatment and was introduced to the Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) and many others on the same journey. I felt hope for the first time, being with so many people who experienced what I experienced and were getting better. I often think about people who are still suffering, and if only they knew that they are not alone.

I urge you to support this bill and help ensure that recovery community centers have the resources they need to continue making a positive impact in the lives of people like me who are in recovery from substance use disorder.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kari Taylor